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INDIVIDUAL HEALTH RISK INFORMATION FOR CONSUMERS WHEN PURCHASING
GROCERIES
[INDIVIDUELLE GESUNDHEITLICHE RISIKOINFORMATION VON VERBRAUCHERN BEIM
EINKAUF VON LEBENSMITTELN]

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Description

The invention relates to a method for informing, educating and instructing consumers on healthful nutrition before, during and after shopping in a grocery store or food store or department that is oriented to an individual, personally-related risk profile that is determined according to the current and individual health status.

Informing consumers using books, brochures, seminars and personal advice regarding proper healthy nutrition is known. The success is extraordinarily low (according to German Nutrition Society: under 30%).

Almost all those who are improperly nourished have already had negative effects with different types of diets and weight reducing methods (29,000 worldwide). The successes are often long in coming and only of lasting effect in the rarest of cases. This also confirms a study issued recently by the German Society of Preventive Medicine and Early Recognition in Munich. Strictly maintaining a diet over longer periods of time has a negative effect on the study results, even with respect to permanent weight loss.

The reason for this lies in the relationship between supplied and consumed energy. During a diet, the body switches to "low gear" and thus continuously consumes fewer calories. In extreme cases, with a calorie-reduced diet that is maintained over the long term, the body starts to gain weight again even with a calorie count of 800 - 1000 calories. If the person eats normally again after these diets or weight reduction methods, the lost pounds return again quickly since

the energy consumption still remains lower, in spite of the usual supply of calories. In this way, the initial diet success quickly turns into a failure. This is called the yo-yo effect.

A change in nutrition with the help of diets and weight reducing methods usually involves high costs and additional time. This is mainly based on the fact that diet products or medications are offered for the known diets and weight reducing methods, which in some cases are very expensive and can only be purchased in special stores, like pharmacies and health food store. Besides that, such a diet often offers additional or replacement food. However, for the persons involved, these diet measures mean additional time required that has a considerably negative effect on their lifestyle. This is true for professionals as well as for singles and individual family members who place themselves on a weight reducing diet.

In the last few years, the major part of the population has been prompted and motivated to adopt an environmentally-conscious and healthy lifestyle. However, in the area of proper nutrition, there is a lack of simple, reliable and generally easily understandable aids, and above all in everyday life.

Improper nutrition can only be detected in exceptional cases. Generally, improper nutrition habits do not become noticeable until after 20 years, therefore a correction often does not begin until health risk factors develop. Successfully fighting the dangers is then usually no longer possible, or only conditionally possible. In the Federal Republic of Germany, diseases caused by nutrition cost the

health insurance companies DM 80,000.-- (1992).

Everyday circumstances often stand in the way of the motivation to change one's own eating habits. Whether due a strong professional commitment or profession-related time demands, the personal environment as a single or family life is affected. In each case, the personal life circumstances have to be taken into consideration in the scope of measures to correct nutrition errors.

The object of the method according to the invention is to promote understanding and to achieve preventive health measures by practical and balanced nutrition.

It is also an object of the method to educate those addressed in an understandable form about a healthy lifestyle and convince these persons or lead them to their own understanding. In addition, the will power of the person addressed must be reinforced to make a change or adaptation of that person's nutrition according to the newly developed consciousness.

According to the invention, these objects are achieved in that,

- the food and/or the price tags and/or other information signs and/or means are provided with a declaration index related to the physiological nutritive value of the food related to the consumer,

- the consumer receives a card and/or a different information medium that, analogously to the declaration index, has comparable visible (e.g. optical) and/or invisible (e.g. magnetic) information or individual, current nutrition-dependent health advantages and risks,

- that in the grocery or food store or department, a reading

device and a printer and/or another information system is installed that is connected in a centralized or decentralized manner to a computer with corresponding software.

The goal of the method is to start with the formation of consciousness in the place where the daily nutrition starts: during purchasing. In this case, the principle "prevention is better than healing" also applies. Nutrition-related diseases usually only become visible and perceptible after many years. Therefore, this concept is a long-term concept.

A permanent change in nutrition to a varied diet with a lot of variety is necessary. In a healthy person, this varied diet with a lot of variety requires no medical support or enrichment by so-called nutritional supplements. In fact the opposite is true: it can be purchased from the normal grocery trade and so can be integrated without problems into all conceivable everyday situations.

The only condition: the food must be combined in such a way that the body receives all the necessary components for life. In this process, the foods full of calories that are mainly responsible for weight gain are to be reduced in the individual case by the amount necessary for the individual.

The method is not set up in such a way that the target group will be confronted with long-standing and loaded terms. For healthy people, there is also no need for use of additional and expensive medications or products that can only be obtained in pharmacies or health food store. The requirements are provided where the everyday and "normal"

nutrition starts: when buying groceries.

Previously, the grocery trade has pursued the goal of earning increasing profits with increasing turnover and has limited the product advice to a superficial description of the qualities (light, tender and full of vitamins). In many cases, even this minimum advice was not completely complied with because of the sales philosophy and marketing strategy.

It is especially advantageous that the consumer can obtain purchasing recommendations and/or a weekly nutritional plan that is related to the shopper's own health status and individual risk spectrum and takes into consideration what is offered at that particular time of the year with the help of the card, the reading device and the printer and/or the other information aids used.

It is also of the greatest advantage if the consumer himself recognizes the advantages and risks existing for him with regard to the nutritional physiology value of the food and his actual individual health status and/or the risk profile determined, with the help of the visible and definable information on the card and/or the other information media and the visible and definable index on the foods and decides on healthy, proper nutrition.

For System 2, the following requirements must be met:

1. Over the course of time, all permanent full-time employees hired will be subject to in-house training on nutritional counseling.
2. Additional training will exist on proper nutrition for children, which will be offered by the local high schools or other

educational associations that are open to the community or to interested parties in the target group. In addition, the customer should also learn about the newly designed sales areas and offerings by evening presentations on-site at the sales branches of the company.

3. Computer programs will create nutritional plans weekly.

4. Computers, printers and card readers will be set up that are connected to the central computer and/or other information aids.

5. Extensive advertising will be carried out.

6. Publicity work that is set up in a goal-oriented manner will accompany the system.

Besides that, there must also be an opportunity for personal customer support on site. Here it will be necessary to orient the store manager or a substitute or the core personnel to the course program using a video training tape.

The following requirements must be produced for carrying out the project:

1. Video tapes for training and/or sale, as well as brochures or books for the employees used in this campaign and interested customers.

2. The internal training of a "nutrition officer" in every store in the chain.

Patent Claims

1. Method for informing, educating and instructing consumers on healthful nutrition before, during and after shopping in a grocery store or food store or department that is oriented to an individual,

personally-related risk profile that is determined according to the current and individual health status, characterized in that

- the food and/or the price tags and/or other information signs and/or means are provided with a declaration index related to the physiological nutritive value of the food related to the consumer,

- the consumer receives a card and/or a different information medium that, analogously to the declaration index, has comparable visible (e.g., optical) and/or invisible (e.g., magnetic) information or individual, current nutrition-dependent health advantages and risks,

- that in the grocery or food store or department, a reading device and a printer and/or another information system is installed that is connected in a centralized or decentralized manner to a computer with corresponding software.

2. Method according to Claim 1, characterized in that the consumer can print out purchasing recommendations and/or a weekly nutritional plan that is related to the shopper's own health status and individual risk spectrum and takes into consideration what is offered at that particular time of the year with the help of the card, the reading device and the printer and/or the other information aids used.

3. Method according to Claim 1 or 2, characterized in that the consumer himself recognizes the advantages and risks existing for him with regard to the nutritional physiology value of the food and his actual individual health status and/or the risk profile determined,

with the help of the visible and definable information on the card and/or the other information media and the visible and definable index on the foods and decides on healthy, proper nutrition.

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